

## Message Text

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P 102044Z JUL 75  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

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AFDROUGHT

ROME FOR FODAG PASS OSRO

FOL REPEAT STATE 161094 ASENT ACTION NIAMEY  
COTONOU ABIDJAN INFO BAMAKO JUL 09

QTE

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AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: COTONOU-GAO SHIPMENTS

REFS: (A) NIAMEY 2633 (B) NIAMEY 2370 (C) COTONOU 970

1. AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS ON COTONOU-GAO FOOD SHIPMENTS HAVE  
BEEN GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY DEPARTMENT AND AID.

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2. WITH RESPECT TO NON-NIGER ASPECTS OF GAO FOOD SHIPMENT,  
AID/W HAS ASSURED ITSELF OF THE FOLLOWING:

(A) FOOD NEED-MALI: FOOD REQUIREMENTS OF VI REGION HAVE  
BEEN CAREFULLY MONITORED BY EMBASSY/AID/BAMAKO OVER PAST

SEVERAL MONTHS- PERIODIC UP-DATES ON FOOD-NEED SITUATION HAVE BEEN RECEIVED HERE AND FORM BASIS FOR OUR CURRENT FOOD DELIVERY SCHEDULE. WHILE IMPRESSIONISTIC SUMMARIES SUCH AS FURNISHED IN NIAMEY 2370 ALSO PROVE USEFUL, WE RECOGNIZE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN TRYING TO ASSESS FOOD NEEDS OF VAST VI REGION OF MALI ON THE BASIS OF WHAT WE UNDERSTAND WAS A TWENTY-FOUR HOUR STOP-OVER VISIT IN TOWN OF GAO.

(B) FOOD DISTRIBUTION PLAN: ON JUNE 16, 1975 DIRECTOR OF OPAM FOR VI REGION OF MALI INDICATED QUOTE A GRAVE NEED UNQUOTE FOR ADDITIONAL FOOD GRAIN AND LISTED THOSE AREAS OF

THE REGION WHICH WOULD RECEIVE PORTIONS OF U.S.SORGHUM STOCKS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE FROM COTONOU. WE NOTE THAT FFPO/NIAMEY WAS UNABLE TO DISCUSS FOOD DISTRIBUTION PLAN WITH DIRECTOR OF OPAM ON HIS JUNE 18 VISIT AND THE GOVERNOR OF REGION HAD JUST RETURNED TO GAO (AFTER AN EXTENDED ABSENCE) A FEW HOURS PRIOR TO HIS BRIEF EXCHANGE WITH FFPO.

(C) STORAGE IN GAO: MORE THAN ADEQUATE STORAGE SPACE EXISTS IN GAO REGION FOR U S. STOCKS BEING FORWARDED VIA COTONOU. INTER ALIA, A RECENTLY COMPLETED 3;000 MT WAREHOUSE IS BEING RESERVED BY OPAM FOR NEW U.S.SORGHUM.

(D) LEBBEZENYA/GAO ROAD: THIS ROAD IS NOT RPT NOT BLOCKED TO TRAFFIC FOR SIX WEEKS OF THE YEAR AS SUGGESTED REF (A). FOR PAST SEVERAL YEARS TRAFFIC HAS PROCEEDED OVER ROAD WITH SOME BRIEF INTERRUPTIONS AFTER HEAVIEST OF RAINS IN MONTH OF AUGUST. NORMAL PRACTICE IS FOR TRUCKERS TO CONTINUE ON AFTER WAITING FEW HOURS UNTIL PORTION OF RAIN WATER HAS BEEN GROUND-ABSORBED. FACT THAT AID FINANCED CONTRACTOR PRESENTLY WORKING ON WORST STRETCHES OF ROAD SUGGESTS THAT INTERRUPTIONS CAN BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM THIS YEAR.

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(E) EVACUATION RATE OF STOCKS FROM COTONOU: AS A RESULT OF AID AND OTHER DONOR PRODDING, EVACUATION RATE OF RELIEF FOOD FROM COTONOU INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY DURING JUNE TO A HIGH OF 240 MT PER DAY DURING FINAL WEEK OF MONTH. IT IS ANTICIPATED THIS RATE WILL BE MAINTAINED AFTER BRIEF HIATUS DUE SOCOPAO DIFFICULTIES INASMUCH AS EVACUATION BY TRUCKS IS BEING PERMITTED BY OCDN THIS YEAR. AFTER SIGNING AID CONTRACT RECENTLY FOR TASK OF FORWARDING 1,250 MT U.S. SORGHUM FROM COTONOU, MANAGER OF SOCOTRA SUGGESTED DELIVERIES COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MID-AUGUST.

(F) FORWARDING RATES: NOT CERTAIN WHAT BASIS USED FOR PAR 3 (C) REF (A) COMMENT ON EXTORTIONIST RATES. AID SIGNED CONTRACT WITH SOCOPAO LATE IN JUNE COVERING 2,500 MT OF

SORGHUM AT LOWEST KNOWN RATE FOR FORWARDING FOOD GRAIN TO GAO FROM ANY POINT ON WEST OR NORTH AFRICAN COAST. CONTRACT WITH SOCOTRA COVERING 1,250 MT PORTION OF SORGHUM IS AT A RATE SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN SOCOPAO'S.

(G) STORAGE AT COTONOU PORT: STATEMENT CONTAINED REF (A) IS FIRST INDICATION RECEIVED HERE THAT U.S. STOCKS WHICH ARRIVED COTONOU LAST WEEK MAY NOT BE PROPERLY STORED. MAY BE SOME CONFUSION ABOUT STORAGE TECHNIQUE. IN TRANSIT STORAGE SITUATIONS STOCKS AT TIMES ARE STORED OUT-OF-DOORS ON PALLETS UNDER HEAVY TARPS IF CONDITIONS IN ALTERNATIVE COVERED

STORAGE SPACE ARE SUCH THAT FOOD GRAINS WILL BE SERIOUSLY THREATENED BY INFESTATION. AT ANY RATE, FUNDS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IN AID-COTONOU CONTRACTS TO COVER COSTS OF RENTAL STORAGE SPACE IF NECESSARY.

3. WITH RESPECT TO VIEWS ON NIGER ECONOMY REFERRED TO PARA 3 (E) REF (A), WE WERE NOT RPT NOT FULLY AWARE OF EXTENT OF CRITICAL DAY-TO-DAY SITUATION DEPICTED IN REF (A) WHICH REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN CREATED BY TRANSPORT BOTTLENECK IN DAHOMEY ALTHOUGH SHORTAGE OF FUEL SUPPLIES HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY REPORTED, THIS FACTOR HAS NOT BEEN DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH RELIEF FOOD SHIPMENTS SINCE LATTER DO NOT ORDINARILY COMPETE WITH FUEL DELIVERIES FOR SAME OCDN HAULING SPACE. LINK BETWEEN DELAYED ARRIVAL CANADIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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FLOUR AND CURRENT PRICE OF BREAD COMES AS A SURPRISE HERE SINCE CANADIAN FLOUR REMAINED ON COTONOU DOCK FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WHILE GON EVACUATION PRIORITY WAS GIVEN TO OTHER RELIEF AND COMMERCIAL GOODS. OUR PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT AWKWARD PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS IN OTTAWA HAD MORE TO DO WITH MOVEMENT OF CANADIAN FLOUR FROM COTONOU THAN RECOGNIZED NEED OF GON IN CONNECTION WITH USG APPEAL TO GON FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF MALI FOOD SHIPMENTS EMBASSY/NIAMEY ROLE NOT REQUIRED AT THIS TIME SINCE GOVERNMENT OF MALI HAS ALREADY MADE HIGH LEVEL FRATERNAL APPEAL TO GON.

4. THREE PERTINENT FACTORS HAVE COME TO ATTENTION OF AID/W DURING PAST WEEK IN ADDITION TO CONCERNS EXPRESSED REF (A) ON CRITICAL STATE OF NIGER DAY-TO-DAY ECONOMY:

(A) ARRIVAL RATE OF COTONOU STOCKS: DUE CANCELLATIONS AND/OR SPEED-UPS ON FREIGHTER DELIVERIES FIRST THREE SHIPMENTS OF U.S. SORGHUM HAVE ARRIVED AT COTONOU PORT WITHIN A TEN DAY PERIOD RATHER THAN OVER FOUR WEEK PERIOD AS PROGRAMMED BY AID. IN THIS CONNECTION, WORD JUST RECEIVED INDICATES THAT LAST SHIPMENT OF 2,304 MT ON MARYMAR WILL BE DELAYED SEVERAL DAYS ON ITS WEST AFRICAN RUN.

(B) SOCOPAO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES: ALTHOUGH COTONOU 970 INDICATES SOCOPAO CONTINUES TO FUNCTION AT PRESENT, ABRUPT DEPARTURE FROM COUNTRY OF THREE SENIOR OFFICIALS OVER LAST WEEK-END SUGGESTS THERE MAY BE TEMPORARY HIATUS IN FOWARDING OF SOME RELIEF STOCKS.

(C) RAPID RISE OF NIGER RIVER: ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL IN GUINEA HIGHLANDS HAS CAUSED NIGER RIVER TO RISE AT RAPID RATE. LEVEL OF RIVER AT KOULIKORO, MALI IN LATE JUNE WAS TWICE HEIGHT OF RIVER AT SAME PERIOD DURING 1974. AS RESULT MALIAN RIVER TRANSPORT OFFICIALS ARE PLANNING EARLY START ON 1975 RIVER BARGE HAULING OF FOOD GRAIN FROM MOPTI TO VI REGION.

5. AFTER REVIEWING FACTORS IN PARA 4 ABOVE, AID/W HAS CONCLUDED THAT LAST PORTION (2,304 MT) OF CURRENT 6,000 MT COTONOU SHIPMENT LIKELY TO ARRIVE VI REGION OF MALI AT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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APPROXIMATELY SAME TIME (I.E., LATE AUGUST) WHETHER IT IS SHIPPED VIA COTONOU OR ABIDJAN (FOR MOPTI). CONSEQUENTLY, SUBJECT TO BAMAKO CONCURRENCE, AID/W HAS DIRECTED THAT THIS LAST PORTION BE OFF-LOADED AT PORT OF ABIDJAN IN ORDER TO RELIEVE REPORTED DAY-TO-DAY CRITICAL STRAIN ON NIGER ECONOMY CAUSED BY LIMITED TRANSPORT FACILITIES- IN DAHOMEY

6. FOR ABIDJAN AND COTONOU: SEPTEL FOLLOWS ON NEW SHIPPING DETAILS INCLUDING LATEST ETA OF MARYMAR.

DECONTROL: 7/9/76. INGERSOLL

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